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EDUCATION IN BELGIUM

Description

This report deals with the system of education in pre-war Belgium and the changes introduced under the German occupation. After an analysis of the two main issues -- language and religion -- which have influenced all levels of education in Belgium, a description of the administrative framework of the school system is given. Primary, secondary, and higher education are dealt with in separate chapters, outlining the various kinds of schools on each level of education as well as their curriculum. In the parts describing the educational system during the period of German occupation, the various measures affecting the teaching personnel, the teaching program, and the school system are analysed. Liberation problems for the elementary, secondary, and higher education are also given.

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During the German occupation elementary and secondary education has been reorganized by the collaborationist Secretaries-General. Patriotic teachers have been replaced and a new educational program introduced.

The Germans have devoted considerable efforts to bringing Belgian higher education into line with the New Order. The University of Brussels has been closed, and quisling professors have been forced on the other universities, with the exception of the Roman Catholic University of Louvain.

The problem of education in liberated Belgium will be to restore the system to its pre-war structure. The elementary and secondary schools face the problem of reconstructing school buildings and of obtaining adequate educational supplies and equipment. The higher educational system will be confronted with a serious shortage of instructors.

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Summary

Belgium has a complicated school system, consisting of secular public schools, subsidized private schools, and independent private schools. The last two types are made up mostly of Roman Catholic institutions. The entire system is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Instruction and National Education.

The program of the elementary schools in Belgium is roughly comparable to that followed in the United States. Elementary schools are for the most part organized and maintained by the communes.

Secondary education is provided in lower and higher secondary schools. The program of the latter differs greatly from that of the American high schools. The most numerous secondary schools are the athénées, which provide instruction in the ancient and modern humanities, each offering two curricula. Short intensive courses are not favored, and within each curriculum the student is left no choice of subjects. Technical education is given on all levels of instruction in separate institutions.

There are four universities in Belgium, two of which are state institutions, one a Roman Catholic university, and the other an independent private one. In Belgium, for the most part, students attend the university to acquire specialized

professional training rather than to obtain a liberal education. Therefore, the greater number of students attend courses leading to professional degrees. The four degrees obtainable in Belgium are: candidat (bachelor's degree), licencié (master's degree), ingénieur (engineering degree) and docteur (doctor's degree).

During the German occupation elementary and secondary education has been reorganized by the collaborationist Secretaries-General. Patriotic teachers have been replaced and a new educational program introduced.

The Germans have devoted considerable efforts to bringing Belgian higher education into line with the New Order. The University of Brussels has been closed, and quisling professors have been forced on the other universities, with the exception of the Roman Catholic University of Louvain.

The problem of education in liberated Belgium will be to restore the system to its pre-war structure. The elementary and secondary schools face the problem of reconstructing school buildings and of obtaining adequate educational supplies and equipment. The higher educational system will be confronted with a serious shortage of instructors.

EDUCATION IN BELGIUM

I. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Compulsory education for all children from six to fourteen years of age was introduced in Belgium in 1914, several years later than in most other Western European countries. The ensuing four years of war seriously impeded the extension of the country's educational system. After 1918, however, Belgium concentrated special attention on its school system and in consequence, illiteracy dropped from 17 percent in 1910 to 8.12 percent in 1930.[1]

Two independent issues, religion and language, always have exercised a predominant influence on Belgian education. Both questions long have been the object of bitter controversies and finally have been adjusted by a complicated system of compromises.

A. Religious Issue

The importance of the influence exercised by the Roman Catholic Church on Belgium's educational system is a reflection of the powerful position held by the Church in all spheres of the country's national life. In the educational field the religious issue centered in the Catholic opposition to the

1. These figures are heavily weighted by the illiteracy of people over sixty years of age,16 percent of whom can neither read nor write. For the age group from fifteen to twenty, illiteracy at the census of 1930 was only 1.17 percent.

establishment of a system of secular and compulsory education. The Constitution of 1831 had proclaimed freedom of education, partly as an expression of liberal democracy, partly as a guarantee to the Catholic Church against state control. Indeed, freedom of education implied the right of private organizations to create schools, and the Church made wide use of this right. But in large part because of religious pressure the enactment of legislation requiring free and compulsory education was delayed until 1914. At present, most elementary schools provide time for religious instruction, either by members of the clergy or under their supervision. Parents may, however, request that their children be excused from these courses.

B. Language Issue

The language question, which stands out as one of the country's most important problems, has also influenced the development of Belgium's educational system. In the first years of Belgian independence, instruction in the schools was given exclusively in French. Flemish was not taught until 1864, and even then did not enjoy official equality with French. As in the case of the religious question, the struggle raged furiously until finally a compromise was agreed upon in 1930. Under the pre-war system, the geographical position of a commune in regard to the "linguistic line" determined the language in which instruction was given.[1] In

1. Belgium is divided into two distinct linguistic areas: Flanders and Wallonia. The linguistic line runs from Maastricht in the east, westward below Brussels to the neighborhood of Courtrai and Boulogne. The provinces to the north of this line form the Flemish group, whereas the remaining part of the country makes up the Wallonian area.

the Brussels area, however, parents could send their children either to French or Flemish language schools. The study of the second national language was offered in the public elementary schools anywhere in the country if it was requested by a sufficient number of parents. In the secondary schools, either the other national language or English was taught. This compromise raised new difficulties. French-speaking parents living in Flemish regions resented being forced to send their children to Flemish schools, as did Flemish families who resided in the Walloon regions and whose children were forced to attend French language schools.

C. Administration of the School System

Belgium has a complicated school system which is composed of three different types of schools. Most important are the secular public schools, which are maintained by the state, the province, or the commune. A second type is made up of private schools subsidized by the state or the commune; they are for the most part Roman Catholic schools having a semi-official character. A third group of free schools includes private institutions, also largely under Roman Catholic supervision, which receive no support from public funds. This school system is further divided according to the level of instruction:

1) Primary Education (Enseignement du degré inférieur)

a) Kindergartens (Ecoles Gardiennes)
b) Elementary Schools (Ecoles Primaires)

2) Secondary Education (Enseignement Moyen)

a) Lower Secondary Schools (Degré Inférieur)
b) Higher Secondary Schools (Degré Supérieur)
c) Normal Schools (Enseignement Normal)
d) Technical Education (Enseignement Spéciaux)

3) Higher Education (Enseignement Supérieur)

The Ministry of Public Instruction and National Education (Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et de l'Education Nationale) controls the public and subsidized schools. However, certain phases of education fall under the jurisdiction of other ministries. Second only to the Ministry of Public Instruction in this respect is the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, which supervises the management of public-technical education, including many industrial, professional, commercial, and household economic schools. The Ministry of Justice administers institutions for the care of the insane, abnormal, deaf, and blind as well as the Schools of Criminology and Scientific Police Research.

The Ministry of Agriculture supervises the National School of Veterinary Medicine, and the National Institutes of Agronomy at Gembloux and Ghent. The Ministry of Colonies exercises control over the Colonial University of Antwerp, the Colonial School of Brussels, and the School of Tropical Medicine, as well as the entire educational program in the Congo. And, finally, military schools are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of National Defense.

In addition to the regular ministerial control, a

number of independent organizations created by the National Government supervise the training and education of special groups of children. The two most important of these are the National Office for Child Welfare (Oeuvre National de l'Enfance) and the National Office of War Orphans (Oeuvre National des Orphelins).

D. Tuition and Scholarships

Primary education in Belgium's public schools is tuition free. In the lower secondary schools the fees are Frs 200 ($7) yearly, while the tuition in the higher secondary schools is Frs 300 ($10) a year. Students who are not residents of the commune in which the secondary school is located pay additional yearly charges of 40 and 50 francs respectively. Reduction of rates or even exemption of tuition fees may be allowed at the request of parents, especially those having large families. The National Government has furthermore established scholarships for children especially endowed (Fonds des mieux doués) providing funds for secondary education. Scholarships for higher education are granted by the University Foundation. Aid is given only to those who are prepared for university study and who agree to repay the foundation within ten years after graduation. The Foundation conducts its own rather rigorous examination to determine the fitness of the candidates.

The Foundation also assists the Government in providing some scholarships for study in other European countries and in cooperation with the Educational Foundation of the Commission for Belgian Relief awards eighteen scholarships for study in the United States.

II. PRIMARY EDUCATION

A. Kindergartens

Belgian kindergartens are open to children from three to six years of age and are designed to prepare them for the educational program of the elementary schools. Although the communes are not required by law to establish public kindergartens or to subsidize private ones, the Belgian law stipulates that on the demand of a number of parents representing at least thirty-five children between the ages of three to six years, the commune can be requested to organize a kindergarten. The number of kindergartens has steadily increased in Belgium. After the initial decrease which followed immediately after the first world war, school attendance in the kindergartens has risen regularly and many new schools have since been created. In 1937 there were 4,125 kindergartens in Belgium, having an enrollment of 235,718 children, representing almost half the number of children in that age group.[1]

1. 1936 statistics indicated a total of 399,760 children between three to six years of age. The official Statistical Yearbook of 1939, the latest one published before the invasion, does not quote figures for more recent dates.

B. Elementary Schools

Compulsory elementary education begins when the child is six years old, and continues for six years. Parents may send their children to public or private schools or give them instruction at home on condition that the educational program prescribed by law is followed. There is no coeducation in the elementary schools in Belgium. Each commune administers its own public school (école communale). The communal council appoints an Alderman for Public Instruction, who has under him a staff of inspectors. There are two types of subsidized schools, one under communal, the other under state control. The communes may sponsor one or more free (private) schools, provided these schools meet certain standards with respect to curricula, teaching staff, school buildings, inspection, etc. By sponsoring a school, the commune takes over the responsibility for paying the salaries of the teachers and for supplying school books to the students. Commune-sponsored schools (écoles adoptés) are thus private schools to which the communes give a status similar to that of the public schools. In practice, only communes with Catholic communal councils have sponsored schools.

The second category of subsidized elementary schools is comprised of the state-sponsored schools (écoles adoptables) which

receive state subsidies and state supervision and thus do not fall under the control of the commune. Finally, there are a number of private elementary schools, which are neither supervised nor subsidized by the government. Thus on the level of elementary education, the Belgian school system is divided as follows:

1. Public schools : Communal schools
2. Subsidized private schools : a) Commune-sponsored schools; b) State-sponsored schools
3. Free schools.

The sponsored schools outnumber the public schools only in three Flemish provinces (West Flanders, East Flanders, and Limburg). The combined enrollment of the sponsored schools is equal to that of the communal schools, as can be seen from the following statistics for 1937:

	Number of primary schools	Number of teachers	Number of pupils
Communal schools	5,775	18,231	478,601
Commune-sponsored schools	2,078	9,547	298,879
State-sponsored schools	1,404	6,750	182,713
Total	8,657	34,528	960,191[1]

The program of instruction in the elementary schools is prescribed by the Ministry of Public Education and National Instruction and includes such subjects as religion and ethics.

1. The total number of children of school age in 1937 amounted to 1,069,693. The primary schools had 14,619 children above school age. This makes it possible to estimate that 94,883 pupils attended the private primary schools, for which no statistics are published.

reading, writing, arithmetic, weights and measures, the French and Flemish languages, geography, the history of Belgium, drawing, hygiene, singing, and gymnastics. In the elementary schools for girls, needlework, domestic economy, and cooking are also included. The communal council is free to arrange the program of study for the primary schools under its direction, provided that the subjects required by law are taught.

III. SECONDARY EDUCATION (ENSEIGNEMENT MOYEN)

A. Lower and Higher Secondary Schools

The "lower" secondary schools, écoles moyennes du degré inférieur, for children between the ages of twelve and fifteen years, are operated either by the state (écoles moyennes de l'état), by the communes (écoles moyennes communales), or are Catholic institutions subsidized by the state (école moyennes patronnées).

The chief purpose of the lower secondary schools is to begin the general training in the languages and sciences necessary for more advanced study. In 1937 there were 205 public lower secondary schools in Belgium with an attendance of 25,839 students. There were also non-subsidized Catholic lower secondary schools, for which no statistics are available.

"Higher" secondary schools (écoles moyennes du degré supérieur) prepare boys and girls from fifteen to eighteen years of age for admission to universities.

In 1937 there were eighty-eight higher secondary schools in Belgium with a total attendance of 30,375 students. Secondary schools for boys created by the state, provinces, or communes are called athénées (royaux, privinciaux, communaux), and those for girls are called athénées or lycées. Catholic higher secondary schools for boys are called collèges, those for girls Instituts; the former are sometimes subsidized (collèges patronés).

The administrative body of the athénée includes a principal, called préfêt d'étude, one or more professors of religion, professors of general courses, professors of special courses, and study masters (maîtres d'études). The principal directs and controls the studies, maintains order and discipline, assigns duties to each member of the staff, and represents the school in its contacts with parents and with the authorities. Each year he or his delegate works with the director of the lower secondary schools of the region to recruit pupils for the athénée. In most cases, however, lower secondary schools are attached to the athénées, thus extending the program of studies from three to six years. In that case, the three first years of the athénée fall under the lower secondary program, while the last three years form part of the higher secondary education system.[1] In the higher secondary schools each subject is taught over a number of years; each phase is repeated two or more times to

1. Thus secondary education in Belgium is provided for in lower secondary schools, higher secondary schools, and mixed lower and higher secondary schools.

intensify and broaden the student's knowledge. Short intensive courses are not favored.

The athénées and colleges offer four curricula or divisions, two each in the ancient and the modern humanities.

1.	Ancient humanities	a. Greek-Latin b. Latin-mathematics
2.	Modern humanities	a. Sciences b. Commercial studies

Once the choice of curriculum is made (in the first year of studies for the ancient humanities and in the third year of studies for the modern humanities) the student must follow a set program of courses and is allowed no freedom in choosing the subjects to be studied. Each year of study is termed a class. The classes are numbered, sixth, fifth, fourth, third, second with a final and highest class as first or rhetoric. This numbering is the reverse of that used in elementary education.

In the athénées different programs of study are offered to students enrolled in the two curricula. The weekly program in the division of ancient humanities includes the following subjects for the entire course of six years: six hours of Latin, four hours of Greek, twelve hours of modern languages (French, Flemish, English, and German), three hours of history and geography, three hours of mathematics for the Greek-Latin division and seven hours for the Latin-mathematics

division, and two hours each of ethics, physical and natural sciences, drawing, and physical education. The program for the modern humanities during the three higher years includes fifteen hours of modern languages, three hours of history and geography, and two hours each of ethics, physical and natural sciences, drawing, and physical education. The program for the modern humanities during the three higher years includes fifteen hours of modern languages, three hours of history and geography, and two hours each of ethics, physical and natural sciences, drawing, and physical education. In the commercial division two hours of instruction in mathematics and five hours of commercial sciences are given, whereas the scientific division includes seven hours of mathematics.

B. Normal Schools (Enseignement Normal)

There are two types of normal schools in Belgium, one for the training of teachers for elementary schools and another for lower secondary schools. Teachers for the elementary schools are trained in the primary normal schools (écoles normales primaires) of the State, or in private institutions (agréés). Applicants for admission to the first year of a primary normal school must be Belgian citizens or be eligible to become citizens at the age of eighteen, and must have reached the age of fifteen by 31 December of the year of entry. The first three years of the five-year course correspond to the three upper classes of the Greek-Latin division of the athénée, but instruction in psychology, pedagogy, and related subjects is substituted for the ancient languages. The fourth year is devoted to professional training of the student-teacher; he learns the technique of teaching, and

is given practice teaching in the elementary school attached to the normal school.

Instruction is given to prospective kindergarten teachers in special sections (sections normales gardiennes) attached to most normal schools. These admit students under twenty-two years of age, who have graduated from the primary schools or lower secondary school, or have passed an examination in primary school subjects. The curriculum provides for three years of study, essentially practical and weighted with pedagogical subjects. Teachers for the lower secondary schools are trained in secondary normal schools which offer a three-year course, the first year of which includes only preparatory courses. Graduates from the athénée or the primary normal schools may enter the second year of study.

C. Technical Schools (Enseignement Spéciaux)

In Belgium technical instruction is given on all levels of education above the six years of the elementary school. Technical schools, however, do not parallel the lower and higher secondary schools, nor do the higher technical schools draw their students from lower technical institutions. On the contrary, the technical secondary schools receive many students from the general elementary schools, and many graduates from the scientific courses of the athéneés attend technical institution of the university grade.

Technical education is, for the most part, provided by the communes, the provinces, or by private institutions. The Office of Technical Instruction (Office de l'Enseignement Technique) which is attached to the Ministry of Public Instruction, has control over the programs of the technical schools. The six main subjects of technical instruction are household economics, vocational and industrial design, and industrial, commercial and higher technical subjects. Agricultural education is given in vocational extension courses, open to pupils of at least fourteen years of age who have completed the primary schools, and in regional schools of agriculture and horticulture. Of the latter, the most important is located at Huy (Ecole moyenne pratique d'agriculture de l'Etât).

IV. HIGHER EDUCATION

A. General

There are four universities in Belgium, the private universities of Louvain and Brussels, and the state universities of Liége and Ghent. Higher education, particularly that financed from national funds is regulated in great detail by national law. For the state universities national laws determine the conditions of national supervision and inspection and the reports to be made to the Government, the number and kind of the faculties and the fields of study assigned to each, the requirements for admission, the registration and fees of students, the granting of scholarships, and the conferring of degrees. In Belgium most students attend the university to obtain specialized training; therefore they enroll in courses leading to a professional degree. The Belgian universities, unlike the American ones, are not divided into undergraduate and graduate schools. The programs of the free as well as of the state universities are shaped by legal requirements and consequently are much the same in the four universities; the student has few electives. The degrees obtainable in Belgian universities are degree of candidat (bachelor's degree), licencié (master's degree), ingénieur (degree of engineer), and docteur (doctor's degree).

The degrees of candidat (bachelor) in philosophy and letters, mathematics, and natural and medical sciences

are generally open to graduates of the higher secondary schools.

To attain the degree of candidat in philosophy and letters, sciences, or civil engineering the student must follow the required curriculum for at least two years and pass two examinations; for the degree of candidat in natural and medical sciences the course of study is three years and includes three examinations. The degree of licencié in any of the four fields requires two years of study and two examinations in addition to the candidat degree in that field. The doctorate in philosophy and letters or in sciences is granted not less than a year after the degree of licencié has been obtained on the presentation of an original dissertation acceptable to the examining jury and defended publicly by the student. The doctorate in law and the degree of pharmacist are conferred at the conclusion of three years of study beyond the corresponding degree of candidat; the doctorate in medicine requires four years of study in addition to the three-year curriculum for candidat in natural and medical sciences. Each of the nine different degrees of civil engineering is conferred after three years of study beyond the degree of candidat in civil engineering.

The certificate of qualification for teaching in the higher secondary schools (agrégé de l'enseignement moyen du degré supérieur) can be obtained by students in either

philosophy and letters or sciences after two years of study beyond the requirements for the candidat, and must either follow or be taken with the degree of licencié. Candidates for it are examined in (1) experimental pedagogy, (2) history of pedagogy, (3) general methods, and (4) special methods in the subjects taught in the higher secondary shcools. The candidate must have done supervised practice teaching for at least a year in a secondary school.

B. Catholic University of Louvain

The university of Louvain, founded in 1425, was until 1816 the only institution of higher learning in the country. It is still the largest university in Belgium; of 10,800 students enrolled in the Belgian universities in 1937, 4,300 attended Louvain. The students sign a declaration of adherence to the Roman Catholic faith, and the university is under the authority of the Belgian bishops, who appoint the Rector (Rector Magnifique). During the nineteenth century instruction was given exclusively in French, but in recent years courses in Flemish have been added, so that at the present the university is a bilingual institution. The university has faculties in theology, philosophy and letters, law, medicine, and sciences. Affiliated with the University are the Collège des Théologiens, dit du St. Esprit; Collège du Pape Adrien VI, Collège Américain, Seminaire Léon XIII, and the

Collège d'Arras and the Abbaye St. Gertrude for women.

C. Free University of Brussels

The Free University of Brussels was founded in 1834 by a group of free-thinking liberals to end the Catholic monopoly of higher education. It has remained the ideological rival of Louvain. Its professors and students pledge themselves to the principles of free thought. In 1937, 3000 students were enrolled. French is the principal language of the university, though shortly before the war a movement was initiated to give certain courses, especially in the law faculty, in both national languages. The entire control of the university is vested in its council of administration whose twelve to fifteen permanent members are chosen for a term of ten years from the benefactors of the university, the rector, the two past rectors most recently in office, the administrator, a delegate chosen for one year by the resident professors of each faculty, and a number of officials of the communal council of Brussels. The rector is elected annually by the resident professors from among their own number, although the same rector may be re-elected. The university has five faculties: philosophy and letters, law (with a special section for admiralty law), sciences, medicine, and applied sciences.

D. State Universities

The two state universities are under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Public Education, who appoints the professors. The University of Liége, with 2,150 students in 1937, is the

larger of the two. It has been a French-speaking institution since its foundation in 1817. The University of Ghent, founded a year earlier, was French-speaking until the last war when the German occupying authorities transformed it into a Flemish institution. After the war, instruction was again given in French, but in 1930 the Flemings finally succeeded in their long struggle to make Ghent purely a Flemish university. It had 1,300 students in 1937.

E. Other Institutions of Higher Learning

Higher education is also provided by certain other institutions, such as the faculty of philosophy and letters of the Catholic Institut Saint Louis in Brussels and of the Collège Notre Dame de la Paix at Namur, the Institut Supérieur de Commerce at Antwerp, the Institut Technique du Hainaut at Mons, the Veterinary School in Brussels, the two state agricultural colleges at Gembloux and Ghent, the University for Colonial Affairs at Antwerp, the Military Academy at Brussels, the Instituts des Arts décoratifs at Brussels, and the four schools of music (Conservatoires). These institutions of higher education did not confer doctor's degrees.

V. BELGIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION

A. Elementary and Secondary Schools

The German-imposed reorganization of Belgium's educational system follows closely the pattern of Nazification employed by the occupying authorities in other fields of

Belgium's national life. The administration of the educational system together with that of other cultural institutions was entrusted mainly to the collaborationists. The Germans were greatly handicapped, however, because of the complexity of the system itself and the persistent opposition of the Roman Catholic Church. However, the Germans enacted measures regulating the teaching personnel, the teaching program, and the administration of the educational system.

1. Measures Affecting the Teaching Personnel. Under German occupation the post of Director General of the Ministry of Education was replaced by two Directorates, one for the elementary and secondary schools, the other for higher education.

In September 1940 a commission was established before which public school teachers who had left the country at the time of the invasion only to return later were called to account for their absence. This commission was empowered to take disciplinary action, including the dismissal of any teacher from his post. In fact, however, only a few hundred teachers were affected. A German decree ordering the resignation of all civil servants over sixty years of age also affected a small number of older members of the teaching staff.

A year later a more sweeping measure was introduced. The powers of appointment and dismissal were taken from the communal councils and given to the Secretary General of the Interior, Gerard Romsee, assisted by an advisory commission, composed of a bilingual chairman and five Flemish and five Walloon members.

Romsee, whose avowed intention was to apply a "course of disinfection to the whole educational body," issued a decree validating teachers' diplomas which had been issued in 1917 and 1918 by a German-appointed examining board. These steps were in line with the general German policy of destroying the autonomy of local governments and transferring power to the collaborationist Central Administration. Romsee, however, found his plan for reconstituting the school system difficult of achievement, and his annual report of 1942 complained that many communes had failed to notify him of vacancies in their schools.

Further control over the teaching personnel was exercised through the teachers' union. In January 1942 all organizations of the teaching profession were amalgamated into a single organization of teachers, Corporation de L'Enseignement, affiliated with the Nazi-sponsored Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers (Union des Travailleurs Manuels et Intellectuels -- UTMI). The General Federation of Teachers (Fédération Générale des Instituteurs), which had refused to recognize the new union was dissolved by the Germans. The new organization, however, was not successful partly because the Catholic teachers were reminded by their authorities that they were permitted to belong only to the organization of the Instituteurs Chrétiens. It is significant that the German occupying authorities themselves issued a decree in October 1940 stipulating that Jews could not be teachers except in Jewish schools.

2. Measures Affecting the Teaching Program. Shortly after the occupation, the Germans ordered a revision of all school books. A special commission was created by the Secretary General of Education to expurgate from textbooks all interpretations which were contrary to the New Order. History and geography books underwent especially rigid revisions. In October 1940 Cultural Councils were established to promote cultural relations with Germany. The Secretary-General of Education was required to accept the advice of these councils in all matters concerning the educational program. At that time an entirely new school program was to be devised by the newly-established General Educational Council and the provincial Chambers of Pedagogy. A collaborationist paper commented, however, in February 1942 that school teachers in general were still hesitating to adopt this program. The Germans also invited Flemish school teachers to study in Germany and granted scholarships in German universities to Flemish pro-Nazi teachers under the "Langemarck Study Scheme."

In line with their general policy of favoring the Flemings, the Germans promoted the use of the Flemish language. In August 1940, the Secretary General of the Interior appointed a commission (Commission de controle linguistique) charged with the strict administration of the existing language laws. This

commission, headed by a Flemish extremist, proceeded to extend the use of Flemish in the school system. After declaring Brussels as a Flemish area, it forced the municipal authorities and the boards of public kindergartens and elementary schools to transfer all Flemish-speaking children into Flemish classes even against the will of their parents. Thus by July 1941, 6,700 children of the Brussels area shifted to 306 newly-established Flemish classes. Similar measures were applied in other towns near the linguistic line. The German language was also given a more prominent role in the schools. It was decreed the official language in the schools of the Eupen and Malmedy regions (annexed to the Greater Reich) and also in the communal schools of the Arlon area (Belgian Luxembourg). Elsewhere persons declared to be of German ancestry were forced to send their children to German schools.

3. Measures Affecting the School System. Belgian parents soon began to transfer their children from schools with quisling teachers to public schools with more patriotic staffs or to private Catholic schools, which were not under the authority of the Secretaries General. Similarly pupils were transferred from communal schools which were compelled to teach Flemish to private institutions offering instruction in French. The Germans sought to counteract this movement by decreeing on 13 August 1942 that no school could be opened and no new class established in

an existing school without the authorization of the German military administration. Schools set up or reopened after January 1942 were ordered to apply for permission to continue their activities.

This decree, while limiting the growth of non-collaborationist schools, also made possible the establishment of New-Order schools, designed to inculcate the principles of National Socialism. A boarding school for boys had already been established at Vilvorde for the training of Flemish Nazi leaders. When this school was transferred to Germany in February 1942, Devlag, a Flemish fascist group, opened special schools in Antwerp and later in other Flemish centers for children of members of the collaborationist parties, "where they will not be made to suffer for their parents' convictions." The Jeunesse Légionnaire (JL), the youth organization of the fascist Rex party, opened similer schools at Brussels, Liége, and Charleroi in 1944. The party newspaper explained this action thus: "our children are very often subjected to persecution in the schools which they are attending, and in addition the training they receive is not in accordance with our revolutionary ideals and our ideas on education." In addition to these quisling institutions German schools were opened at Brussels, Antwerp, and Heysden. A German decree of 1 December 1941 required the Association of Jews in

Belgium to establish and maintain their own elementary schools, high schools, and technical schools. All these institutions were placed under the control of the Secretary General of Education. The mass deportation of Jews to Poland made a continuation of the Jewish educational program virtually impossible.

B. Higher Education

1. General. The Germans have interfered more with higher education in Belgium than with the elementary and secondary schools. Louvain University, because of the protection of the Church, to a certain degree has been able to ward off German interference. Brussels University, on the other hand, was closed by the Germans, when it assumed the leading role in resisting the Nazi reorganization of the country's educational system. The two state universities, being under the immediate supervision of the Ministry of Education, have been subject to direct German pressure.

2. German Control. During the first months of the occupation, Belgian universities were not disturbed. To give the appearance of normalcy, the four universities were encouraged to hold examination sessions in June 1940 and to begin the new academic year as usual in October. As soon as the universities convened, however, the Germans began to exercise a closer control by installing German representatives in the two state universities and in the Free University of Brussels. Louvain University

alone escaped outside interference.

At the time of the invasion, some three hundred professors went to France, and about a third of them later escaped to other countries, especially to the United States. Those who chose to return were forced to defend their absence before a commission. As in the case of the elementary and secondary school teachers, however, few professors were released from their teaching posts. The German authorities then forced the removal of all Jewish professors and of all known anti-Nazis. Simultaneously the Germans insisted on the appointment of German and Belgian collaborationist professors, especially at the University of Ghent. Among the Flemish fascists appointed to these posts were Professors Van Roosbroeck, Speelers, Martens, and Jacobs (the last of whom had been condemned to death for treason after the first world war and had fled to Germany where he was made professor at Hamburg).

German attempts to impose similar measures on the Free University of Brussels were unsuccessful and resulted in its being closed. At first the occupying authorities had demanded only that the university enlarge its program of instruction in Flemish. In September 1941, the Administrative Council agreed to create eighteen professorships in Flemish, but refused to appoint three German candidates with Nazi sympathies. When the Administrative Council decided to suspend its lectures rather

than to submit to the German demands, eight of its members were taken to a concentration camp. Finally in December 1941 the Germans ordered the University closed for "subversive political activities."

After the capitulation of the Belgian army, many university students enlisted in Allied armies or were held in Germany among the 70,000 prisoners of war. Nevertheless, the number of Belgian students increased considerably during the occupation. In the academic year 1941-1942, there were 15,300 students at the four universities and at fourteen other institutions of higher learning; the university enrollment alone was 12,700 (2,000 more than in 1937-1938). Louvain, because of its relative safety from Nazi interference, saw its pre-war registration of 4,000 rise to 6,000 in 1941-1942 and to 8,000 in 1942-1943. At the time of its dissolution in December 1941, the University of Brussels had 2,500 students (500 less than before the war). Later 300 of these registered at Ghent and 600 at Louvain, where they were exempted from pledging their adherence to the Catholic faith. The enrollment at Ghent University was 2,180 in 1941 (880 more than in 1937) but fell to 2,068 the following year in spite of the influx from Brussels. This decrease is probably due to the partial German success in Nazifying Ghent University. At Liége University student enrollment did not increase during the academic year 1941-1942.

One of the main reasons for this increase in enrollment was that until February 1943 students were exempted from deportation to Germany in the labor draft. At that time, however, the Germans decreed six months' compulsory labor for all students in universities and technical colleges. The Rectors of the three universities wrote a joint letter of protest and refused to send the names of their students to the occupying authorities. The Germans retaliated by arresting the Rector of Louvain University, and by ordering that no student could be admitted to a Belgian university without having spent a year in the labor service. Many students, however, did not report to the labor office, but instead joined the underground formations. In January 1944 it was reported that more than half of the students of the University of Liége were hiding in the Ardennes.

University students for the most part have resisted Nazi propaganda and have refused to cooperate with the occupying authorities. In Liége only two or three members of the entire student body are said to have enlisted in the Rexist-sponsored Walloon Legion. At Louvain, the Congress of Flemish students, meeting in March 1942, opposed all collaboration with the Flemish fascist party. At Ghent, in December 1942, only 300 students, representing one-seventh of the total enrollment attended a meeting of the German authorized students' association which announced its adherence to the New Order.

Belgian university students did not play an important role in the country's pre-war political life, although they did exercise a predominant influence on the development of the language problem. Student organizations, such as youth groups, were not powerful forces. Under German occupation the youth organizations of the fascist parties alone have been allowed to continue their activities.

VI. LIBERATION PROBLEMS

A. Elementary and Secondary Education

Liberated Belgium will not be confronted with a serious problem of re-education; the Nazis have failed, on the whole, to imprint their doctrines on Belgian youth. The principal question in liberated Belgium will therefore be the restoration of the pre-war educational system. Since the fundamental structure of the educational system has remained virtually intact, the most pressing need will be to nullify the Nazi decrees regulating primary and secondary institutions. The Belgian Government-in-exile has already declared illegal the acts of the collaborationist Secretaries-General. All their dismissals and appointments of teachers are thus considered void, and the way has been opened for the reappointment of the loyal teachers. There will be various material problems such as the reprinting of the school-books expurgated by the Germans and the repair and reconstruction of school buildings. Since undernourishment during the years of

occupation has seriously affected the health of the children, an extensive program for providing adequate food for school children will undoubtedly be included in the post-war school program.

B. Higher Education

The most important post-war problem which will face Belgian higher education is the reinstatement of adequate teaching staffs in the universities. Collaborationist professors will need to be dismissed, and scholars removed from their posts by the Germans may well be granted the privilege of returning. It is likely, however, that the shortage of younger instructors will be so acute that universities will be unable to replace older scholars, even if all the exiled professors should return. To meet this need, the Belgian Government-in-exile has established a procedure by which Belgians studying in foreign universities can receive official credits for academic work completed in foreign universities. The Advisory Commission of Belgian Education in England with the cooperation of the Ministry of Public Instruction proposes to determine the relative value of foreign degrees and to insure their recognition in liberated Belgium. It is unlikely, however, that this procedure will provide an adequate number of trained scholars for Belgian universities after the liberation.